

SECRET

Not distributed

das

9 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Communist Intentions in Vietnam

1. This day the Board, the ONE Staff, and the leading experts of SAVA and OCI devoted more than two hours to a general discussion on Vietnamese Communists intentions. An informal memorandum on the subject written by Bill Hyland served as the point of departure. It is clear that there is no consensus within the Agency on the key issues which may be described as follows:

a. How much urgency is there in the Communist effort to create "favorable" conditions for negotiations?

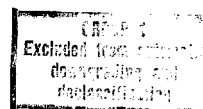
b. What results did the Communists expect to gain from the attack on the cities?

c. How well do they think they are doing thus far in the winter-spring offensive?

d. Are they going to put most of their chips on the table over the next month or so or will they move with some caution, always holding enough in reserve to support a "protracted" war?

2. Some people at the table were most concerned that we not suggest the Communists are in a "go for broke" stage because it might lead to what they would consider false and unfounded optimism over the prospects once the winter-spring offensive has been defeated. Others were concerned not to underplay the extent of the change in Communist strategy in the direction of an all-out effort, in part out of concern that we will underestimate Hanoi's willingness to take risks, to throw in additional resources, and particularly to commit additional regular units from North Vietnam at crucial stages of the struggle when our own reserves are fully extended.

SECRET



SECRET

3. Whatever the Communist strategy, additional clues should be available in the next week or two. If they fail to press ahead at Khe Sanh and to carry out a second round of attacks elsewhere in South Vietnam it will suggest that no final climatic effort is intended.

4. In the meantime, however, we think planners should be acutely aware of the Communist capability to send additional NVA forces across the DMZ and to the vicinity of Khe Sanh within the next 30 days. This could produce a very tense situation if coordinated with fresh attacks against town and cities in the South which stretched US/ARVN reserves.

ABBOT SMITH
Director
National Estimates

SECRET